HOUCK, HERBERT SPENCER

DRAWER 23

SCULPTORS-H
(STATUETTES)

71.2009.085.03031

Statues of Abraham Lincoln

Herbert Spencer Houck

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the

Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

New

New York Times Jan. 24, 1932

LINCOLN KNEELING, a Statue in Bronze by Herbert Spencer Houck, Which Will Be on Exhibition During February at the Kraushaar Galleries. Mrs. William T. Hildrup Jr., Sister of the Sculptor, Plans to Present the Statue to the United States Government as a Memorial on the Battlefield at Gettysburg. (New York Times Studios, From Dorr News Service.)

LINCOLN STATUE FOR GETTYSBURG.

This bronze statue of Abraham Lincoln was designed by Herbert Spencer Houck, and is on exhibition all this week in New York. Mrs. William T. Hildrup, Jr., the sculptor's sister, plans to present the statue to the Government to be erected as a memorial on the battlefield at Gettysburg.

Pittsburgh Telegraph Feb 7, 1932

Statue Lincoln

New York Times Studios, From Dorr News Service

LINCOLN KNEELING

A STATUE IN BRONZE BY HERBERT SPENCER HOUCK

THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR, BOSTON, FRIDAY,

FEBRUARY 12, 1932

Humble Are the Truly Great

THE KNEELING LINCOLN

Statue in Bronze Designed by Herbert Spencer Houck.

Wide World

New Lincoln Statue Attracts Attention in New York Exhibit

Work of Pennsylvania Man Unique in That It Shows Emancipator as a Supplicant—Will Be Offered Goverment for Gettysburg

Special from The Christian Science Monitor Bureau

NEW YORK, Feb. 12—A new statue of Lincoln which shows the Civil War President in prayer—the first time a sculptor has attempted the conception of a supplicating Lincoln—is on exhibition at the Kraushaar Galleries here during February.

It is the work of the late Mr. Herbert Spencer Houck of Harrisburg, Penna., and will be offered by the sculptor's sister, Mrs. William T. Hildrup Jr., to the Federal Government as a memorial for the Gettysburg battlefield, where Lincoln, in what is probably his most famous address, said "this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom." Arrangements have yet to be made with the Battlefield Commission for the placing of the statue, which is to be cast in colossal size.

The kneeling Lincoln is a man in whom faith is a deep river, and, while there is humility in the slightly bent shoulders and head, the face is that of one who has entered into the very heart of prayer, as though the artist had sought to symbolize in the mood of faith the power in Lincoln for clear and self-sufficient thought, his great capacity for formulating his position out of his own meditations. This is the Lincoln who, when the fate of the Union hung in the balance, was wont to walk under the tall trees of Soldiers' Home, three miles from the political clamors of Washington, deeply reflecting and infinitely wistful.

country; that he never joined their church because he could not give his assent, "without mental reservations, to the long complicated statements of Christian doctrine which characterize their Articles of Belief and Confessions of Faith."

Lincoln wrote this in the latter part of his life, and the illuminating fragment continues:

"When any church will inscribe over the altar, as its sole qualification for membership, the Master's condensed statement of the substance of both Law and Gospel, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself,' that church will I join with all my heart and with all my soul."

An interpretation of a prayerful Lincoln, therefore, had to be of the man who was poles removed from the dogmatist and in whom was developed to the full the "amazing power to be at the same time passionless in temper while unfaltering in conviction." The statue might well have for its text the autograph fragment on belief which Lincoln wrote for his own eyes alone:

Assumed Full Responsibility

"The will of God prevails. In great contests each party claims to act in accordance with the will of God. Both may be, and one must be, wrong. God cannot be for and against the same thing at the same time. In the present Civil War it is quite possible that God's purpose is something different from the purpose of either party; and yet the human instrumentalities, working just as they do, are the best adaptations to effect His purpose. . . ."

This was written by the final Lincoln who emerged in July, 1862, from a period of indecision and, having taken things into his own hands at last, never thereafter relinquished supreme control as he was given to see it. His story thenceforward was the story of his country. He had grasped the full nature of his task as the military head of a democracy, and put this conception firmly into effect despite furious clamor from Congress, forcing the terrible Committee on the Conduct of the War, "which had the temper and aimed to get the power of the great Committee of the French Revolution," slowly but steadily into insignificance. He was determined to conduct the war on a national basis, transcending party, and was able to maintain his bold attitude because he had captured the hearts and imagination of the people in whom he believed was "the origin of all that is wise, right and attractive."

is no cavil. . . . There is no man in the country so wise, so gentle and so firm."

Fills Cherished Ambition

Mr. Houck chose, therefore, the latter-day Lincoln, wholly the democrat and the humanitarian, who could devote himself utterly to his cause and yet in a way that seemed void of passion, it was so detached and unviolent. He strove in the figure for humanity of mood rather than for the realism of baggy clothes and sad, seamed features, and, quite aside from any artistic claim the statue may have, from the point of view of conception, critics and fellow artists see it as ranking with the St. Gaudens, French, Barnard and O'Connor Lincolns that have taken their places as great art.

Mr. Houck was born in Danville, Montour County, Penna., 13 years after the summer of '63 when the guns roared in the wheatfields of Gettysburg, to the South. Later his father, the late Rev. William A. Houck, took his family to Harrisburg, which lies so near the battlefield where the tide of war changed against the Confederacy that earthworks were thrown up and the shotgun militia called out the June that found Lee's army loose in the North.

The sculptor did not know until he was 50 that he had the talent for carving figures. Four years before he passed on last June he heard Lorado Taft lecture in Harrisburg and soon afterward he moved to New York City to begin an intensive study at the Academy of Fine Arts. His work showed unusual ability, and the bronze of Lincoln was his third and last undertaking.

It was a task for which he had great ambition, for all his life he had been an admirer and student of Lincoln, and he preferred to live simply and to try to seek out the "plain people" whose heart it had been Lincoln's genius to find out and reach.

Mr. Houck served in three wars, including the World War, and, although cited for bravery, rejected the rank offered him, choosing to be "one of the men in the line."

"I have rarely seen him more serene and busy," wrote his secretary, John Hay. "He is managing this war, the draft, foreign relations and planning a reconstruction of the Union all at once. . . . The most important things he decides and there

Sunday,
January 24, 1932

LINCOLN KNEELING, a Statue in Bronze by Herbert Spencer Houck, Which Will Be on Exhibition During February at the Kraushaar Galleries. Mrs. William T. Hildrup Jr., Sister of the Sculptor, Plans to Present the Statue to the United States Government as a Memorial on the Battlefield at Gettysburg. (New York Times Studios, From Dorr News Service.)

CAPITAL LEADS NATION TRIBUTE

Newark Star-Eagle 2/12/34

Roosevelt Has Wreath Placed at Statue; Springfield Marks Anniversary.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 12 (AP).—A wreath at the feet of a statue of the great Emancipator was President Roosevelt's tribute today to the 125th birthday anniversary of Abraham Lincoln.

In the pillard white stone memorial that houses probably the most famous of all Lincoln statues—a memorial whitened by fresh snow today—more than forty patriotic organizations commemorated the day.

The White House wreath was placed by Colonel Edwin M. Watson, military aide to the President.

At Washington cathedral presentation was made of a few Lincoln statue, "Lincoln at prayer," a gift of Mrs. William T. Hildrup Jr. of New York.

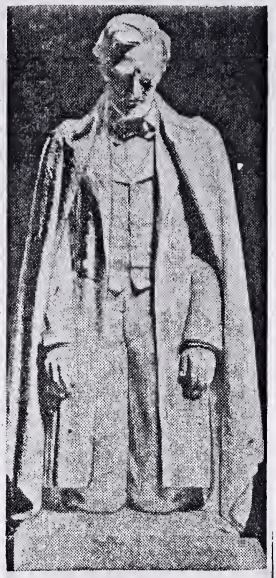
SPRINGFIELD, Ill., Feb. 12 (AP). —Abraham Lincoln's career as a successful politician and lawyer started a hundred years ago with his election to the Illinois House of Representatives.

The year 1834 was the turning point in his life, Lincoln students said today as his 125th birthday anniversary was observed in the home town of the Civil War president.

He went into politics and decided to study law, definitely taking up the legal possession as something better than his work as store clerk, postmaster and deputy surveyor in the village of New Salem.

Young Lincoln was just 25 years old when he campaigned successfully as a non-partisan candidate for the Legislature.

Historians have little information on the specific issues expounded by Lincoln in 1834. An autobiography by Lincoln, however, says that it was during the campaign that Mayor John T. Stuart, another candidate, started the future president on his legal career.



This striking bronze tribute to President Lincoln, depicting "The Great Emancipator" in an attitude of meditation, was presented to the Washington Cathedral by Mrs. William T. Hildrup Jr. of New York.

N.Y. Eve. Post 2/12/34 *Associated Press Photo*

NATION HONORS HIS MEMORY TODAY

Striking bronze tribute to President Lincoln recently presented to Washington Cathedral by Mrs. William T. Hildrup Jr., of New York City. The statue was executed by Mrs. Hildrup's late brother, Herbert Houck of Harrisburg, Pa. The memorial has been placed temporarily in the north transept where pilgrims will be able to admire it today, the 125th anniversary of Lincoln's birth.

.senberg, surrounded by other pilots. They de-
.on officials. *(Story on page 12.)*

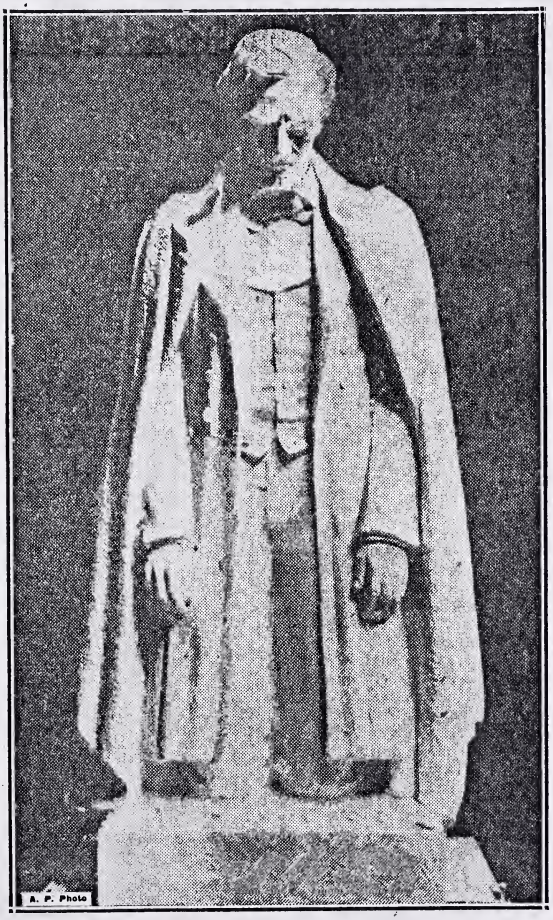
2/12/34 [Associated Press Photo.] Chicago Tribune

NEW LINCOLN STATUE IS ON DISPLAY TODAY.

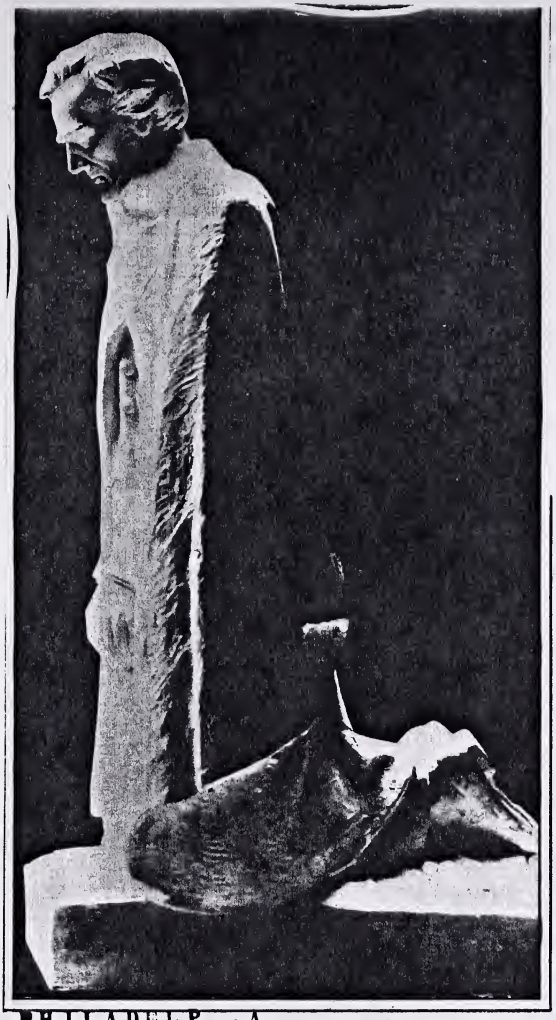
This striking bronze tribute to Lincoln by the late Herbert Houck has been presented to the Washington, D. C., cathedral and is on display today, on the 125th anniversary of Lincoln's birth. *(Story on page 4.)*

2-12-34 THE BOSTON GLOBE—MON

"THE GREAT EMANCIPATOR"



STRIKING BRONZE OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN PRESENTED TO THE WASHINGTON (D C) CATHEDRAL BY MRS WILLIAM T. HILDRUP JR. THE STATUE IS THE WORK OF HER LATE BROTHER, HERBERT HOUCK OF HARRISBURG, PENN.



"LINCOLN AT PRAYER": A NEW STATUE FOR THE WASHINGTON CATHEDRAL

It is the work of the late Herbert Houck, of Harrisburg, Pa., and was presented to the Cathedral by Mrs. William T. Hildrup, of New York, sister of the sculptor. It was accepted by Bishop Freeman and placed temporarily in the north transept

Wide World

PHILADELPHIA
LEDGER --
5-18-34

[Associated Press Photo.]

NEW LINCOLN STATUE IS ON DISPLAY TODAY.

This striking bronze tribute to Lincoln by the late Herbert Houck has been presented to the Washington, D. C., cathedral and is on display today, on the 125th anniversary of Lincoln's birth. *(Story on page 4.)*

Roosevelt's Wreath At Lincoln's Feet

WASHINGTON (AP)—A wreath at the feet of a statue of the great emancipator is President Roosevelt's tribute today to the 125th birthday anniversary of Abraham Lincoln.

In the pillared white stone memorial that houses probably the most famous of all Lincoln statues—a memorial whitened by fresh snow today—more than forty patriotic organizations commemorate the day.

The White House wreath was placed by Colonel Edwin M. Watson, military aide to the President.

At Washington Cathedral presentation was made of a new Lincoln statue, "Lincoln at Prayer," a gift of Mrs. William T. Hildrup Jr. of New York.

Lincoln at Prayer

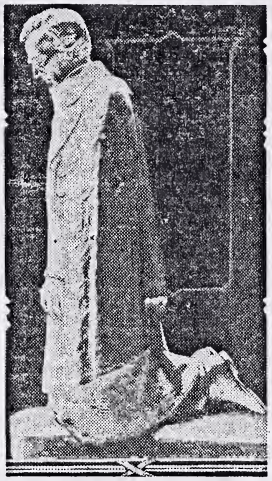
The statue called Lincoln at Prayer is in the Washington cathedral, Washington, D. C. It was executed by Herbert Houck of Harrisburg, Pa., and presented by his sister, Mrs. William T. Hildrup, Jr., of New York. Houck was inspired to make the statue by hearing his grandfather recount his experience of coming upon Lincoln on his knees The figure in the statue is kneeling on a blanket of leaves.

3-8-35

Sacred Heritage to the American People

ONE hundred and twenty-six years have rolled into the ages since the birth of Abraham Lincoln. Kindled at the very hearthstone of his being were the fires of two great principles whose flames have burned with a brilliance undimmed by time through generation after generation—the cause of liberty and equality for every man. Believing inherently in these two great truths, his became an inspired vision.

When the startling breath of war's alarm spread throughout the land, in



Bronze of Abraham Lincoln at Prayer, Gift to Washington Cathedral.

defense of these principles, with impassioned zeal, he led his country to noble victory. The memory of this rugged man of modest dignity and enduring qualities, whose broad ideals become more clearly revealed with the passing years, is a sacred heritage to the American people.

Though the treasured dust and ashes, once his mortal frame, have long been enshrined by a worshipful nation, his immortal spirit lies not entombed, for today, in the hearts of our grateful Republic, the inspiration of the martyred soul of Abraham Lincoln to eternal freedom goes marching on.

FRANK FORD
Dispatch

November 6, 1935

Washington Protestant Episcopal Cathedral
Washington, D. C.

Reverend Sir:

We have observed recently in several newspapers clippings a statement relative to a Lincoln statue which has been unveiled in the Cathedral.

I am wondering if there were any programs printed for the dedicatory service which might be available as we have endeavored to keep here an account of all the heroic statues erected to Abraham Lincoln.

Would you please tell us something about the dimensions of the statue, as to whether or not it should be classified among the heroic bronze statues of Lincoln.

Thanking you very much for any information you may give us about the statue, I am

Very truly yours,

LAW:LM

Director

The National Cathedral Association

Organized in 1898

INCORPORATED UNDER THE LAWS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, 1933

Washington Cathedral
MOUNT SAINT ALBAN
WASHINGTON, D. C.

(1)

November
Twelfth
1 9 3 5

Louis A. Warren, Director,
Lincoln National Life Foundation,
Fort Wayne, Indiana.

My dear Mr. Warren:

Acknowledging your letter of November 6th in behalf of Bishop Freeman and the officers of the Cathedral Foundation, I am happy to send you under separate cover a copy of the Midsummer 1934 issue of our quarterly magazine, The Cathedral Age, which presents a picture of the statue entitled, "Lincoln in Prayer", on page 40. In the caption you will find brief information about the donor, the sculptor and its location in the portion of the Cathedral which is being set aside as a memorial to Mr. Hildrup.

There was no service of dedication when this interesting statue was placed in the Cathedral and it is just possible that the statue will be moved as the construction of the fabric continues in future years.

The statue would not be classified among the heroic bronze representations of Abraham Lincoln because it is only a few feet high. We have other photographs of it in place in the parclose leading from the Crypt of the Cathedral to the east aisle of the North Transept if you wish to have us order prints for you. I am sure that Mrs. Hildrup will be interested to know of your inquiry and will be glad to co-operate in furnishing any further information that you may require. She lives at the St. Regis Hotel, 55th Street at 5th Avenue in New York City and expects to be in Washington later this month for an extended visit.

Thanking you for your inquiry, I am, with all good wishes,

Faithfully yours,

2 Mrs William J Hildrup Jr

Edwin N. Lewis

ENL:n

The Cathedral Age

STATE FLAGS ADORN THE GREAT CHOIR OF WASHINGTON CATHEDRAL

STATUE OF "LINCOLN IN PRAYER" PRESENTED TO WASHINGTON CATHEDRAL

The gift of Mrs. William T. Hildrup, Jr., of New York City, it represents the work of her brother, the late Herbert Spencer Houck of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. This is believed to be the only statute of Abraham Lincoln in a prayerful posture. It attracted wide attention when first unveiled in the sculptor's studio. Mr. Houck, who did not take up sculpture until after he was fifty years old, had a spiritual quality—a real selflessness—that shines forth in his creations. He was wounded in action in the World War while fighting with the 108th Field Artillery of the 28th Division and also served his country in the Spanish-American War. Shortly before he died he conceived the idea of doing "Lincoln in Prayer." The statue was viewed by many pilgrims to Mount Saint Alban on Lincoln's Birthday. For the time being it has been placed at the top of the stairway leading from the north aisle of the Crypt to the North Transept in the portion of the fabric which Mrs. Hildrup is providing as a memorial to her husband.

November 15, 1935

Mr. Edwin N. Lewis
Washington Cathedral
Mount Saint Alban
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Lewis:

Thank you very much for your prompt and full reply to my letter regarding the Lincoln statue in the Cathedral.

We are looking forward with pleasure to reviewing the number of The Cathedral Age when it arrives and will also, as you suggest, write to Mrs. Hildrup for further information about the statue.

Very truly yours,

LAW:LH

Director

November 15, 1935

Mrs.William T. Hildrup, Jr.
St. Regis Hotel
55th Street at 5th Avenue
New York, New York

My dear Mrs. Hildrup:

We have been advised by Mr. Lewis of the National Cathedral Association that you might give us some further information about the bronze statue of Lincoln which has been executed by your late brother, Herbert Houck.

This Foundation is making a permanent file of history about all of our Lincoln statues and we are wondering if you would care to contribute a brief statement as to when the statue was completed and any note with reference to the inspiration which caused Mr. Houck to conceive the prayerful Lincoln.

We would also be pleased to learn the height of Lincoln as he kneels so as to be able to conclude whether or not it would be termed a heroic figure.

Thanking you again for any information you may be able to submit to us, I am

Very truly yours,

LAW:LH

Director

The National Cathedral Association

Organized in 1898

INCORPORATED UNDER THE LAWS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, 1933

Washington Cathedral
MOUNT SAINT ALBAN
WASHINGTON, D. C.

November
Eighteenth
1 9 3 5

Louis A. Warren, Director,
Lincoln National Life Foundation,
Fort Wayne,
Indiana.

My dear Mr. Warren:

Acknowledging your letter of November 15th, I would suggest that you write to Mrs. Hildrup in my care at the Cathedral Offices, Mount Saint Alban, because she is expected to arrive in Washington on Wednesday for an extended visit. She has not been very well in recent weeks and will probably wish to avail herself of our facilities in answering your letter.

Thanking you for your co-operation, I am

Very sincerely yours,

Edwin N. Lewis

ENL:n

November
Twenty-second
1 9 3 5

Louis A. Warren, Director,
Lincoln National Life Foundation,
Fort Wayne, Indiana.

My dear Mr. Warren:

When Mrs. Hildrup came to the Cathedral Offices yesterday afternoon, she left with me your letter of November 15th, in which you ask for further information about the bronze statue of Abraham Lincoln conceived and executed by her late brother, Herbert Houck. Mrs. Hildrup is not feeling well enough to personally attend to this correspondence but she has given me certain information which I shall be glad to forward to you a little later.

She appreciates the interest which the Lincoln National Life Foundation is taking in this work of art and she regrets that her health at the moment will not permit her to send you a personal reply.

With all good wishes, I am

Faithfully yours,

Edwin N. Lewis

ENL:n

The National Cathedral Association

Organized in 1898

INCORPORATED UNDER THE LAWS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, 1933

Washington Cathedral
MOUNT SAINT ALBAN
WASHINGTON, D. C.

January
Eleventh
1 9 3 6

Louis A. Warren, Director,
Lincoln National Life Foundation,
Fort Wayne, Indiana.

My dear Mr. Warren:

Supplementing our correspondence of several weeks ago, I am happy to send you the following information in behalf of Mrs. William T. Hildrup, Jr., of New York City. The bronze statue of "Lincoln at Prayer", created by her brother, the late Herbert Spencer Houck and presented to Washington Cathedral by Mrs. Hildrup two years ago, is 38¾" high and 18¾" wide. It is mounted at present on a temporary base of stone 22¾" high and 14¾" wide. The statue stands at the top of the flight of stone stairs in the parclose leading from the Crypt of the Cathedral to the North Transept. Mrs. Hildrup has selected this immediate portion of the fabric as a memorial to her husband, who was a prominent steel manufacturer, patron of the arts and Churchman in Harrisburg for many years.

Mrs. Hildrup informs me that her father, the late Reverend William A. Houck, D.D., of Carlisle, Pennsylvania, who served as a Chaplain with the northern army during the war between the States, stood close to Abraham Lincoln when he delivered his famous Gettysburg Address. Dr. Houck's children often heard him tell of this incident and she believes that her brother, Herbert, thus conceived the idea of carving a statue which would show the "Great Emancipator" in an attitude of prayer. Mrs. Hildrup was in Florence, Italy, when her brother wrote that this dream was actually taking form in bronze. Incidentally, he took up sculpture as an avocation rather late in life and did not consider himself a professional sculptor.

After his death (see copy of newspaper article enclosed), Mrs. Hildrup gave consideration to a plan of having the statue recast in heroic size for placement on the Gettysburg battlefield. As she became interested in the Cathedral in the Nation's Capital, however, and realized that it is visited by approximately 250,000 pilgrims and worshipers a year, even now when the edifice is only one-third complete, she decided to place the statue

in its small size in the part of the Cathedral fabric which memorializes Mr. Hildrup There it is seen by thousands of pilgrims from all over the world as they conclude their visit to the Great Choir and start down the stairway to the Bethlehem Chapel of the Holy Nativity, where President Woodrow Wilson, Admiral George Dewey, Bishop Henry Yates Satterlee, Melville Elijah Stone, and other eminent Americans have found sepulture.

Hoping that this information is what you had in mind when you wrote to Mrs. Hildrup on November 15th last and sending you and your associates cordial good wishes for the New Year in behalf of her and myself, I am

Faithfully yours,

Edwin N. Lewis

ENL:n

(Newspaper Article)

City Sculptor is
Found Dead
in New York

Widely Known Here;
Created "Lincoln at Prayer" Statue

Herbert Spencer Houck, 54, sculptor and scion of a well-known Pennsylvania family, committed suicide last night in New York City in his studio apartment by shooting himself through the right temple. He was a son of the late Dr. and Mrs. William Houck, Carlisle.

The body was discovered several hours after the shooting by Alexander Ettl, also a sculptor and an acquaintance of the dead man. No motive has been assigned for the suicide. Houck had several exhibits of his work in the last Harrisburg Art Association Exhibit.

He is survived by four sisters, Mrs. William T. Hildrup of New York; Mrs. Norris of St. Joseph, Mo.; Contessa Bochhi-Bianchi, Florence, Italy; and Mrs. Henry Moore Stine, 211 North Front Street, Harrisburg; and a brother, Charles B. Houck, president of the Harrisburg Pipe and Pipe Bending Company.

During the World War Houck was a member of Battery E, 108th Field Artillery, 28th Division, serving overseas with that organization in France and Belgium. He was also a Spanish-American War veteran.

Service in the World War impaired his health to such an extent that repeated operations became necessary and finally shattered his health. It was during the last few years that Mr. Houck took up sculpture.

He spent several years under the tutorship of Albert J. Laessle of the Pennsulvania Academy of Fine Arts. At the time of his death Mr. Houck was engaged in the work of completing a life-size equestrian statue of Abraham Lincoln.

Funeral arrangements will be announced later it was said at his apartment at 211 North Front Street.

On Lincoln's Birthday this year, Mr. Houck had unveiled a statue of "Lincoln at Prayer". This is understood to be the only statue of Lincoln in a prayerful posture. The statue was on view in his studio here and attracted wide comment.

Mr. Houck was a graduate of the Bellefonte Academy and later attended art school in Philadelphia.

January 14, 1936

Mr. Edwin N. Lewis, Editor
The Cathedral Age
Washington Cathedral
Mount Saint Alban
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Lewis:

I am sure Dr. Warren will be very much interested in your letter of January 11; upon his return to the city from a speaking itinerary I will call it to his attention.

If there is any way in which we can be of service to you, do not hesitate to ask me for any information which you desire.

Yours very truly,

Librarian
Lincoln National Life Foundation

MC:EB
M. Cook

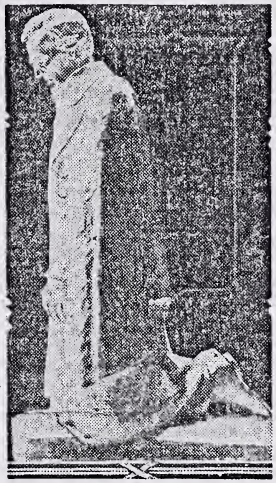
Sacred Heritage to the American People

2-13-36

Spooner was advocate

ONE hundred and twenty-six years have rolled into the ages since the birth of Abraham Lincoln. Kindled at the very hearthstone of his being were the fires of two great principles whose flames have burned with a brilliance undimmed by time through generation after generation—the cause of liberty and equality for every man. Believing inherently in these two great truths, his became an inspired vision.

When the startling breath of war's alarm spread throughout the land, in



Bronze of Abraham Lincoln at Prayer, Gift to Washington Cathedral.

defense of these principles, with impassioned zeal, he led his country to noble victory. The memory of this rugged man of modest dignity and enduring qualities, whose broad ideals become more clearly revealed with the passing years, is a sacred heritage to the American people.

Though the treasured dust and ashes, once his mortal frame, have long been enshrined by a worshipful nation, his immortal spirit lies not entombed, for today, in the hearts of our grateful Republic, the inspiration of the martyred soul of Abraham Lincoln to eternal freedom goes marching on.

Philadelphia Evening Public Ledger
2/12/34

SORROW . . Lincoln at prayer . . .
by Herbert S. Houck, of Harrisburg
Wide World

Abe Lincoln's Soul Goes Marching On

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

His Failure to Join Church Is Rebuke to Complicated Doctrines; Handbill Reveals Religious Attitude

Lincoln is not dead. His soul goes marching on. In this new day with its new deliverance and inhumanity, the spirit of the martyred liberator still lives on. Hallelujah!—Dr. Joseph R. Sizoo.

By HOMER W. KING

THERE is a lesson for Protestantism in the failure of Abraham Lincoln to become a member of any church.

That assertion is made after I have perused the files of the Lincoln Research Foundation in Fort Wayne, the largest collection of information about a single individual excepting Biblical characters in the world.

The Great Emancipator said that he had never united himself to any church because he found difficulty in giving his assent, without mental reservation, to the long complicated statements of Christian doctrine, which characterize their articles of belief and confessions of faith.

I reason that if a man of Abraham Lincoln's stature hesitated for this reason, there must be thousands of others doing so today.

In an address before the General Assembly of Connecticut on June 8, 1865, Congressman Henry C. Deming told of a conversation with Lincoln in which the President had discussed the Protestant church.

Divisions Weighed Heavily

It was evident that Protestantism's divisions weighed heavily on his mind, perhaps postponing his decision to affiliate himself formally with any denomination.

According to the General Assembly minutes, Congressman Deming quoted Lincoln further:

"When any church will inscribe over its altar, as its sole qualification for membership, the Savior's condensed statement of the substance of both law and Gospel, 'Thou shalt love thy Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself,' that church will I join with all my heart and soul."

Let is be clearly understood that our studies of Lincoln must depend chiefly on what he wrote and

ONE of the less publicized statues of Abraham Lincoln (in the Washington Cathedral) portrays him in an attitude of prayer. Some Lincoln students say the figure symbolizes the stellar character of the Great Emancipator better than any other. The interest in this photograph is heightened by the shadowy silhouette. How fitting that Race Relations Sunday is observed near the birthday anniversary of the stout-hearted American whose leadership for the cause of freedom makes such an occasion possible!

on what he said to others as they remember it. Our quotation from Henry C. Deming's speech is of the latter category but the words sound undeniably like Lincoln. No one has disputed them, to my knowledge.

Protestant by Heritage

The argument still persists that Abraham Lincoln was a church member; none will argue that he was not a Christian. And if he were never a Protestant in the sense that his name was on the membership rolls, he was a Protestant by heritage and by association.

Indeed Dean Charles Brown once said that—"If we were starting to canonize some of our American Protestant saints, I should be in favor of beginning with Abraham Lincoln." Bishop Homer C. Stuntz reported seeing Lincoln's picture in cabins in Borneo, Sumatra, China, India and South America, and Dr. Edgar DeWitt Jones called his life an exposition of the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians.

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity. . ."

Of all statements regarding Lincoln's church affiliations, probably that of his wife is most trustworthy. On several occasions, it is said, she told friends her husband never affiliated with any church.

Lincoln's Statement Found Recently

Less than a year ago a printed statement by Lincoln with respect to his attitude toward Christianity was discovered by Dr. Harry Pratt, executive-secretary of the Abraham Lincoln Association.

The printed statement was in the form of a handbill which the 37-year-old Congressional candidate from Illinois caused to be distributed during his campaign for election in 1846.

Addressed to the voters of the seventh Congressional district, the handbill read in part:

"A charge having got into circulation in some of the neighborhoods of this district, in substance that I am an open scoffer of Christianity, I have by the advice of some friends concluded to notice the subject in this form. That I am not a member of any Christian Church, is true; but I have never denied the truth of the Scripture; and I have never spoken with intentional disrespect of religion in general, or of any denomination of Christians in particular."

Many Claim Him

Several denominations have claimed Lincoln's membership but his apparent decision not to join any has brought him closer to our faith as a whole.

The Lincolns were churchgoing people by heritage, from the time Samuel Lincoln, a Pilgrim, came to Massachusetts in 1637 and helped build the oldest house of worship in continual use now standing, to Abraham Lincoln's boyhood when, as he recalled years later, "My mother was a ready reader and read the Bible to me habitually."

Mordecai Lincoln, great great grandfather of President Lincoln, was born among the Pilgrims of Massachusetts, married into a "dissenter" family in New Jersey and was buried in a Quaker grave yard.

Evangelical Appeal "Catches"

In Virginia the evangelical appeal of the Baptists caught the attention of the Lincolns, and the first anti-slavery sermons Lincoln heard were to come from the lips of the pastor at the Little Mount Separate Baptist Church, five miles north of the Lincoln cabin in Kentucky.

Later, in the Pigeon Church of Spencer County, Indiana, the names of both Thomas and Sarah Lincoln and Lincoln's sister went on the church register. Lincoln's name was not found there.

The Disciples of Christ have occasionally claimed Abraham Lincoln as a member, but even two Disciples publications, the Evangelist and the Standard, disagree on the question. The Evangelist claims he was baptized but the Standard says he was not. The Evangelist affirms he joined the church and lived and died a member of the Christian Church but again the Standard disputes the statement.

A few years ago William H. Townsend, a Lincoln historian, wrote of an existing certificate showing that Abraham Lincoln was a life director of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, which is perhaps the only factual indication of his formal affiliation with any church organization.

The religious influence was always with the Chief Executive. Evidences of this are frequent in his remarks and deeds.

At Springfield he regularly attended the First Presbyterian Church. He once told Dr. Phineas D. Gurley, pastor of the Washington New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, that he loved "the Lord my God" and "my neighbor as myself."

"Yes, I Do Love Jesus"

Not long before his death Lincoln said to a friend: "When I left Springfield, I asked the people to please pray for me. . . When I buried my son, the severest trial of my life, I was not a Christian. But when I went to Gettysburg and saw the graves of thousands of our soldiers, I then and there consecrated myself to Christ. Yes, I do love Jesus."

There are several references in Lincoln biographies to his intention of making a public confession. One time he asked a friend if he thought it necessary to be baptized.

Rev. N. W. Miner, pastor of the Springfield church where Lincoln attended, declares the last day of the Great Emancipator's life was his happiest. Recalling the remarks of Mrs. Lincoln, he says her husband on that day said he wanted to visit the Holy Land and see the places "hallowed by the footprints of my Savior."

WASHINGTON CATHEDRAL
MOUNT SAINT ALBAN WASHINGTON 16, D. C.
WOODLEY 6-3600

January 24, 1962

Mr. Kent Sheldon
Chalfonte-Haldon Apartments
3115 Wisconsin Avenue N. W.
Washington 16, D. C.

Dear Mr. Sheldon:

Mr. Hayless has asked me to reply to your letter of January 16th.

Thanks to you for spurring us on to further research. We find that in recounting the sculptor's source of inspiration for the statue of "Lincoln at Prayer" we have been in error. It was the father (not the grandfather) of the sculptor, Herbert Spencer Houck, and his sister, Mrs. William Thomas Hildrup, who was with Lincoln at Gettysburg.

Their father was the Rev. William A. Houck, D. D. of Carlisle, Pennsylvania, who served as a chaplain with the Northern army during the Civil War.

Some time after Mr. Herbert Houck's death, the Historical Research Director of the Lincoln National Life Foundation, sought information concerning the inspiration which caused Mr. Houck to conceive the prayerful Lincoln. Mrs. Hildrup supplied the information that her father, Dr. Houck, as chaplain, stood close to Lincoln at Gettysburg when he delivered his Gettysburg Address and that his children had often heard him tell of the incident that eventually was to inspire his son, Herbert, to depict Lincoln in an attitude of prayer.

Mrs. Hildrup said that she was in Florence, Italy, when her brother wrote that his dream of some day telling the story in sculptured form was then actually becoming a reality in bronze.

There was an "unveiling" of the statue on Lincoln's birthday, 1917, in the artist's studio where it was on view for some time. After the death of her brother a short time

later, Mrs. Hildrup thought of having the statue recast in heroic size to be placed at Gettysburg but, instead, she offered it to the Washington Cathedral. It was gratefully accepted and was received in January 1934.

"Lincoln at Prayer" was placed at the top of the parclose stairs leading from the crypt to the North Transept. In this area are the parclose screen and window, also given by Mrs. Hildrup. The Hildrup gifts were dedicated November 20, 1936. In his prayer of dedication the Bishop referred to "these gifts"—essentially the same form used in the dedication of other parts of the Cathedral with their furnishings.

We have clippings concerning the statue, all quite recent. Most of them are just a picture with a brief caption and probably not very helpful for background information.

Our records show that William T. Hildrup died in 1920 and that Mrs. William T. Hildrup died November 21, 1947. We have found no clippings of the obituary notices.

I hope this background information will be helpful in the preparation of your talk on "Little Known Facts About Well Known Mister Lincoln and Washington, D. C. "

Very sincerely,

Marie Lomas Main
Director of Publicity

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

February 21, 1962

Mr. Bart Gordion
300 Chesterfield Apartments
1111 Wisconsin Avenue
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Bart:

Recently we have been told that Abraham Lincoln went out in the fields somewhere, when he visited Gettysburg for the cemetery dedication, and knelt down in the grass and prayed. I would like to comment on this legend because I know of your great interest in Lincoln and because, as Superintendent of the Gettysburg National Military Park and Cemetery for seventeen years, I should know the major details of that famous visit.

First let me make some trite observations. The nation took Lincoln to its heart, when he was assassinated in the moment of Union victory, as probably no other American has been revered, and many people have devoted much of their lives to a study of this man. The Gettysburg address has been the subject of vast writing. Every moment of the trip up and back has been chronicled and has been described by/or discussed with persons who were present. Nowhere is there any mention of the President wandering off in the wet November weeds for private meditation (in the presence of 10,000 or so persons) and getting his trouser knees discolored in the mud. Unlike the other speaker, Mr. Everett, on that occasion, Mr. Lincoln did not make a tour of the battlefield and he had no opportunity to be by himself.

Furthermore, Mr. Lincoln was not the type to make a public display of the spiritual side of his nature. He did, as we all know, attend a prayer service at the Presbyterian church, but from my knowledge of Lincoln it would have been quite out of character if he had put on a public exhibition.

Perhaps the story has a basis similar to that of Mary Shipman Andrews story when she wrote of Lincoln jotting down the speech on an envelope while he rode the train. That is a charming story and perfectly legitimate fiction which has somehow been confused with fact.

Sincerely yours,

J. Walter Coleman
Staff Historian

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

IN REPLY REFER TO

Gettysburg National Military Park
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

February 23, 1962

Mr. Bert [illegible]
[illegible] Pleasant Avenue
Washington [illegible] D. C.

Dear Bert:

Thank you for your letter of February 20. It was good to hear from you again. I note that you inquire about the authenticity of a story that "Lincoln kneeled on the grass at Gettysburg and prayed". It is presumed that you refer to the dedicatory services in the National Cemetery. Yes, I had heard this story many years ago and I would question it for two reasons.

In the first place, it should be pointed out that the burial ground, consisting entirely of a cornfield, had been purchased and prepared for reburials in the week following the battle according to the plan designed by landscape gardener William Saunders. Not until October 27 did the process of disinterment from field graves and reburial in the cemetery begin. From that time until March, 1864, the area was an active burial ground. It does not appear at all likely that the gardener planted grass in the cemetery until after the completion of the burial program in the spring of 1864.

It should also be noted that there were several observant newspaper reporters at the ceremony in the cemetery. The Philadelphia Public Ledger, for instance, reported that upon the arrival of the procession at the platform in the cemetery, "the President and members of the cabinet, together with chief military and civil dignitaries, took their positions on the stand, the President being seated between Messrs. Seward and Everett. . . . The Public Ledger noted further that "the military then formed in line extending around, the area between the stand and the military being occupied by civilians, comprising about 15,000 people, and including men, women and children. The attendance of ladies was quite large." This report is corroborated by the Philadelphia Press, the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin and the New York Herald. The Cincinnati Daily Gazette reporter observed that on the stage "no chair of state was there for the Chief Magistrate of the Republic, but an old dingy, uncushioned settee, was the seat of the chief dignitaries of the nation during the exercises of three hours. . . ."

With such an observant of detail as the quotations indicate, I doubt that anyone in Lincoln in the manner that you note would not have been observed and reported by all of the correspondents present. Surely, someone in the group would have felt such an act, on that significant occasion, worthy of mention.

Sincerely yours,

Frederick Tilberg
Park Historian

GETTYSBURG COLLEGE
GETTYSBURG
PENNSYLVANIA

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

February 26, 1962

Mr. Bert Sheldon
[illegible] Chesterfield Apts
[illegible]12 Wisconsin Avenue
Washington 16, D.C.

Dear Mr. Sheldon:

Your recent letter to Dr. Robert Fortenbaugh has been referred to me. Dr. Fortenbaugh died in March, 1960.

So far as I know there is no contemporary testimony that Lincoln "knelt in the grass and leaves at Gettysburg and prayed." While it may be true that we cannot prove that he did not, it is also true that we cannot prove that he did not beat his wife on occasion.

As Lincoln scholars know, Lincoln was something of a religious skeptic. He attended church often, believed in God, and conducted himself with tolerance toward other beliefs, but he never affiliated formally with a church. Church people have tried to make a deeply religious and pious man out of him, although he never evinced any preference in that way. But, as you know, Lincoln has been claimed by every group, from capitalists to communists, from atheists to orthodox religionists, and the like.

Sincerely yours,

Robert L. Bloom
Professor of History

LINCOLN LIBRARY

SHIPPENSBURG, PA.

January 30, 1962

Mr. Bert Shepson,
3315 Wisconsin Avenue,
Washington 16, D. C.

Dear Bert:

I am pleased to have your letter regarding the story of Lincoln going out and praying on his knees at Gettysburg. I presume very much in the same fashion as our good friend, George Washington is reported to have prayed at Valley Forge. I do not think there is any possible truth to this story, and certainly anyone who would have any factual information which could support it, ought to do so by bringing it forth and helping those of us who have studied the matter of his visit to Gettysburg exhaustively to have some better idea of how and when this could take place.

Please let me be clear on one thing at the beginning, and that is, while Lincoln's time was pretty much taken up, and is pretty well accounted for from his arrival at Gettysburg on the 18th until his departure on the 19th, I personally could well imagine--other than at the Presbyterian Church, which was the last function he attended before leaving on the train for his return to Washington where he was known to pray, with others assembled, that there is every possibility, because of his disturbed nature not only of the magnitude of the occasion at Gettysburg, but also because of his own personal concern for his family back at the White House, that when alone and in his room at the Wills House, Lincoln might very well have fallen on his knees and prayed, but to my knowledge, no one was in the room at such a time with him, or has ever reported being in the room and seeing Mr. Lincoln pray. My belief is also that he would not have prayed in this manner with somebody present, as he was much too sensitive a man to do so.

I am pleased to hear that you keep in touch with Tom Starr, and hope that he is improving in health, and that you, likewise, are enjoying good health.

With kindest regards, as ever.

Cordially yours,
THE LINCOLN LIBRARY

Harry E. Luhrs
Director

HELuhrs/md

E. B. (PETE) LONG
708 NORTH KENILWORTH
OAK PARK, ILLINOIS
VILLAGE 8-9563

March 11, 1962

Dear Bert and Tom Starr:

In response to your request about the legend of Lincoln alledgedly kneeling and praying at Gettysburg, I may say that as far as I know there is nothing to it. I have not seen the evidence which has given rise to this story and, of course, as an historian have an open mind on it.

However, it seems to me that if true it would have been a well known fact by this time and would have been commented upon by the press, in letters and other media. Unless strong evidence of the indident is presented, I believe it should be ignored, and placed in the realm of the Gettysburg Address being written on the back of an envelope.

Lincoln is too great a man to need these fabrications. They do Lincoln a great and frightful injustice and are largely the work of the well-meaning "halo" school of thought. Lincoln does not need this, and we are in danger of destroying his true greatness by such dreadful myths. On the other hand, all historians must keep it in mind that proof can be presented, and at some later date may be found.

For instance, it is pretty well ascertained now that Lincoln's hat was held by Douglas at the first Inaugural. But above all things, let us be careful in our history.

Most cordially,

E. B. Long

E. B. Long

21 March 1962
302 Chesterfield apts
3315 Wisconsin Avenue

Dear Doctor K Grace Ellis Murray - Director:
I am giving up on my attempt to convince Jim Bayless that "Taint so" about the Civil War President being surrounded by ten thousand persons who "did not observe him down on his knees in the woods and the woods" Each time I write Bayless I get back a courteous (but meaningless) reply. But! He doesn't recant, nor repent nor confess, nor does he straighten up and fly right. He chooses to ignore completely the tremendous weight of circumstantial evidence, the obvious and elementary and extremely sensible

Conclusions; sensible because Mar 21, 1962 (11)

of inescapable facts and circumstances. (A) neither McCoy Burrage nor Barton being as competent as diligent as reliable as they are found this item, to me that is a good ~~item~~ argument versus Bayless. But not just Barton Burrage and McCoy there are many others: Angle Randle warren McMurtry Currant Monaghan Thomas whose Eagle + industrious research has never indicated any such happening (B) Lincoln never did this anywhere else, He was not one to be a phoney nor to exploit nor parade his spirituality. (C) How could it be possible that only Wm A Hower saw this and nobody else?!

So I'm giving up as of now because of the complete lack of impression I have made on Bayliss; I'm just not getting anywhere.

If I, I'm start again I will be letter to the Editor (I probably won't) or to get some

Group to draw up and pass a Res.
(ANA, L.G, CW&T.) So actually, I guess
Sin chen on this. It is too Bad ("Much
after Lincoln!") Now I can see why Everybody
says Randb was the great Historian on
Lincoln, He Proved Everything he said.

Well, it was fun while it lasted.

as Ever, Bert

Gerald; 3-21-62

I spent a very considerable time at Archives Examining Rev Wm A Houser's pension records. These are some of the high lights.

For 21 years before he died (and there are several affadavits on this) he was senile; and in 3 different affadavits gave as the place where he enlisted a different place each time. Once even mentioning a Battlefield. (the date of which is very different that his actual enlistment date)

11-19-63 He was married, and had a six months old baby, and was not in the army, and did not reside in nor near Gettysburg 11-19-63. If he got to Gettysburg (and he might have) he did so as a civilian, a married man with family, and came some distance from his home.

not that those facts completely disprove or prove anything, they don't. But again: Circumstantially they considerably weaken an already terribly weak story. If you want photostats on this material it can be arranged,

But

Our Kneeling Presidents

By WALTER S. STEELE

IT HAS BEEN appropriately written that *"No skeptic ever sat in the White House."*

America's two most famous Presidents, Washington and Lincoln, both born in February, are examples of great leaders in American history who repeatedly confessed their obligation to a Supreme One and who sought His Divine guidance through the medium of prayer.

Official documents containing the words of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln record as though in tablets of stone, the admission of these men of their *reliance on the power of God,* and all of the warped legends and evil-purposed stories to the contrary on the religious attitudes of these two great Presidents *cannot erase the truth* as recorded in these government documents.

That the United States should have the blessing of heaven ever was the hope expressed by these great Chief Executives in their respective famous documents. Washington, in his *"Farewell Address,"* expressed the desire "that Heaven may continue to you the choicest tokens of its beneficence," and Lincoln, in his Gettysburg address, resolved "that this Nation, *under God,* shall have a new birth of freedom."

Some of the other eventful occasions in our history, when Washington exhibited very definite belief in the Deity, included one while advising in the signing of the "Declaration of Independence," on which occasion he responded by writing a touching prayer in which he petitioned the Almighty God "to keep the United States in *Thy holy protection."* Concluding, he said, "Grant our supplication, *we beseech Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

Again, during the Constitutional Convention, he spoke what might be called a sermon to all mankind. In this he appealed, "Let us raise a standard to which the wise and the honest can repair; *the event is in the hands of God."*

Throughout the eight terrible years of the Revolutionary War, he kept close to God Almighty, appealed in humiliation for wisdom and guidance, for safety for his men and the people, for victory for a cause he thought to be just and for the creation of a government of freedom and justice. He appealed successfully to the Continental Congress and to the people for chaplains for the armed forces. He followed with orders to his officers and enlisted men not only to safeguard the rights of one's religious beliefs, but to provide for time and places of worship. He issued appeals against profanity and for cleanliness of mind and body.

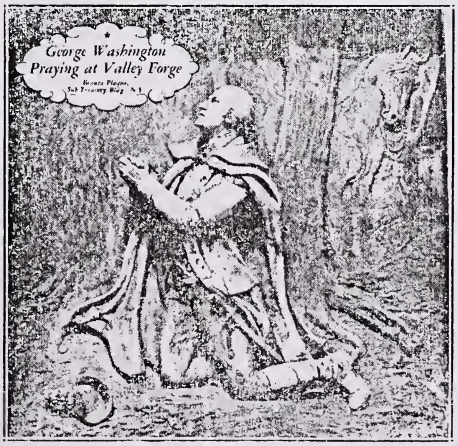
In an order to Col. Benedict Arnold, September 14, 1775, he warned against *"contempt of the religion* of a country by ridiculing any of its ceremonies, or affronting its ministers or votaries." These actions, he said, had been "deeply resented" in Canada. He ordered Col. Arnold to be particularly careful to "restrain every officer and soldier from such imprudence and folly and to punish every instance of it." He also ordered that "you are to protect and support the free exercise of the religion of the country."

An order dated July 9, 1776, issued by Washington, called on all officers and every man in the armed forces to "endeavor to live and act as becomes a *Christian soldier."* While encamped at Morristown, N. J., he set aside, by orders on April 12, 1777, time for the weekly practice of prayer and attendance of church services, ordering all officers and men "not on guard" to "attend divine services at the sound of the second bell" on each Sunday. He himself often led his troops in prayer. An old etching resting in the archives of the Library of Congress pictures him in this act.

Sir George Otto Trevelyn, an Englishman and biographer of Lord Macauley, tells the story of an "old iron master" with whom he lodged near Valley Forge. The "old iron master," who was also an "honest old Quaker preacher" according to Lord Trevelyn, related how he had one day while strolling through the creek at Valley Forge, found Washington's horse fastened to a sapling and the General kneeling with tears streaming down his cheeks in prayer in a thicket by the roadside.

With the coming of victory, Washington was not so naive as to believe that it was strictly through the efforts of him and his staff and enlisted men that victory came, but that a higher Power had led and inspired them, had decreed that righteousness prevail. On the surrender of the whole British army by Lord Cornwallis, Washington immediately gave thanks to God and notified all officers and men that "divine service is to be performed tomorrow." In this he, of course, took part.

BUT these famous utterances are but a part of the fabric of belief in the Deity by Washington and Lincoln, and into this fabric are woven many less quoted statements. What official documents have recorded on paper for posterity, sculptors and artists



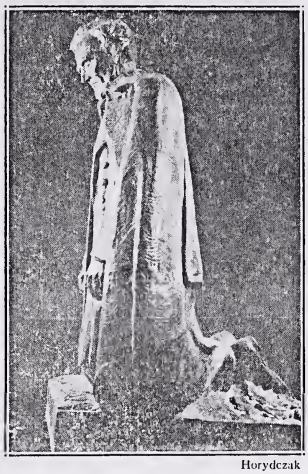
The Kneeling Washington

have translated on canvas and into marble and bronze. Well known is the kneeling painting of Washington referred to as *"Washington Praying at Valley Forge."* One of the prominent works of this nature is by John C. McRae, copies of which rest in the Library of Congress in Washington, D. C. The same scene has been interpreted into bronze in the form of a plaque which hangs in the Sub-Treasury Building in New York City. Still another engraving on file in the Library of Congress is that of Washington leading his men in prayer.

WHAT is believed to be the only statue of Abraham Lincoln in the attitude of prayer is in the Washington Cathedral in the Nation's Capital, and is known as *"Lincoln in Prayer."* It is the work of an amateur sculptor, the late Herbert Spencer Houck, of Harrisburg, Pa. It has attracted considerable attention since it was unveiled in 1933.

Inspired by the oft-repeated story told him by his grandfather of how on the battlefield of Gettysburg he had come across the "Great Emancipator" praying in a field made sacred by the blood of patriots for the cause of humanity, Mr. Houck decided in his declining years to translate the story into clay. He did not take up sculpture until after he was 50 years old. Those familiar with his work say he had a "spiritual quality—a real selflessness—that shines forth in his creations." He served his country in the Spanish-American and in World War I. After his death, the sculptor's sister presented the statue of the "praying Lincoln," cast in bronze from the clay model made by her brother, to the Cathedral.

The artist's view of the praying Lincoln is represented in a canvas of the President kneeling with hands clasped before him, and is known as *"Abraham Lincoln in Prayer."* It was done by Brisley for Dr. Ervin Chapman's *"Latest Light on Abraham Lincoln."*



Horydczak

The Kneeling Lincoln

The appeals of Washington to the Parent of the Universe probably stand out bolder because he became President of a freshly united nation, founded by God fearing men. It fell to the lot of Lincoln, on the other hand, to assume the Presidency of the nation at a time when that union was split by bitterness over a major issue.

The pews in which these two great Americans knelt in prayer are preserved for posterity, the pew in which Washington often knelt in prayer in Christ Church in Alexandria, Virginia, and the pew in which Lincoln often knelt in the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, in Washington, D. C. These pews are marked in bronze.

Much has been written about the religious associations and utterances of Washington, and there is much of record concerning his attitude toward prayer. To the Bishops of the Methodist Church he once said: "I take in the kindest part the promise you make of presenting your prayers at the throne of grace for me, and I likewise implore the divine benediction on yourselves and your religious community." To the Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church he wrote, "You, gentlemen, act the part of pious Christians and good citizens by your prayers and exertions, etc. I beseech the Almighty to take you and yours under His special care." To Congress, he said, "Let us unite, therefore, in imploring the Supreme Ruler of nations to spread His holy protection over these United States."

In his circular letter addressed to the Governors of the States on disbanding the Army, June 8, 1783, Washington said: "I now make it my earnest prayer, that God would have you, and the State over which you preside, in His holy protection." Dispatching his farewell orders to the armies, November 2, 1783, he said he would again offer "his prayers to the God of armies."

It will be recalled that the first "Proclamation for Thanksgiving" in the United States was issued by President Washington on October 3, 1789, and provided that "it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God," and establishing Thursday, November 26, 1789, as a day "that we may unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations" in behalf of the new government.

Legends and distorted stories reflecting unfavorably upon Lincoln's attitude toward a Divine Ruler of the universe are annihilated by the atomic force of the President's words of August 12, 1861, calling for a *national day of prayer and fasting* for the following September.

He said in that proclamation: "Whereas it is fitting and becoming at all times to acknowledge and revere the *supreme government of God,* to bow in humble *submission to His chastisements,* to confess and deplore their sins and transgressions in the full conviction that the *fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,* and to pray with all fervency and contrition for the pardon of their past offenses and for a blessing upon their present and prospective action, and whereas, when our own beloved country, once, *by the blessing of God,* united, prosperous and happy, is now afflicted with faction and civil war, it is peculiarly fit for us to *recognize the hand of God* in this terrible visitation, and in sorrowful remembrance of our own faults and crimes as a nation and as individuals to *humble ourselves before Him and pray for His mercy*—to pray that we may be spared further punishment, though justly deserved; that our army may be blessed and made effectual for the reestablishment of law, order and peace throughout the wide extent of our country; and that the inestimable boon of civil and religious liberty, earned *under His guidance and blessings* by the labors and sufferings of our fathers, may be restored in all its original excellence; therefore I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, do appoint the last Thursday in September next as a day of humiliation, prayer and fasting for all the people of the nation."

In his first inaugural address, March 4, 1861, delivered at a time when the nation was facing a grave period and when gloom hovered over the Capitol, Lincoln said: "Why should there not be a patient confidence in the ultimate justice of the people? Is there any better or equal hope in the world? In our present differences, is either party without faith of being in the right? If the Almighty Ruler of Nations, with *His eternal truth and justice,* be on your side of the North, or on yours of the (*See* PRESIDENTS, *page 42*)

South, that truth and that justice will surely prevail by the judgment of this great tribunal of the American people."

As a further proof of his faith in the Supreme One, Lincoln said in that same inaugural address, "Intelligence, patriotism, *Christianity,* and a *firm reliance on Him* who has never yet forsaken this favored land are still competent to adjust in the best way all our present difficulty."

Lincoln's further confidence in the leadership of God is expressed in his concluding remarks in his message to Congress on the convening of a special session of Congress July 4, 1861, to provide for troops and funds to save the Union. At that time he ended his message with the statement, "And having thus chosen our course, without guile and with pure purpose, *let us renew our trust in God* and go forward without fear and with manly hearts."

OPENING his first annual message to Congress, December 3, 1861, President Lincoln said, "In the midst of unprecedented troubles we have *cause of great gratitude to God* for unusual good good health and most abundant harvests."

That he considered himself a part of the *Christian family* is proven further by his use of the word *"our"* in a proclamation of April 10, 1862, in which Lincoln called for another day of thanksgiving at which the citizens were "to render *thanks to our Heavenly Father* for these inestimable blessings . . ."

Even in the midst of war President Lincoln was mindful of the sacredness of *religious institutions.* In a general order respecting the observance of Sunday in the Army and Navy, issued November 15, 1862, he said, "The President, Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy, desires and enjoins the *orderly observance of the Sabbath* by the officers and men in the military and naval service. The importance for man and beast of a prescribed weekly rest, the sacred right of *Christian soldiers* and sailors, a becoming deference to the best sentiment of a *Christian people,* and a due regard for the *divine will* demand that Sunday labor in the Army and Navy be reduced to the measure of strict necessity." He added that "The discipline and character of the national forces should not suffer nor the cause they defend be imperiled by the profanation of the day nor the *name of the Most High."*

The Civil War President literally preached a sermon in his proclamation for a day of prayer issued March 30, 1863. In it he said in part, "We have been *recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven;* we have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity; we have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other nation has ever grown. *But we have forgotten God.* We have forgotten the *gracious hand which preserved us* in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, *too proud to pray to the God that made us.* It behooves us then, to humble ourselves before the *offended Power,* to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness."

In a "Thanksgiving Day Proclamation" for the same year Lincoln pointed to the "blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies" as well as the fact that "needful diversions of wealth and strength from the fields of peaceful industry to national defense have not arrested the plow, the shuttle, or the ship," and then declared, "No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are *gracious gifts of the Most High God,* Who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy. It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently, and gratefully acknowledged, as with one heart and one voice, by the whole American people. I do therefore invite fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart the last Thursday of November next as a *day of thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father* who dwelleth in the heavens."

Lest it be said that Congressional action prompted the proclamations of these days of prayer previously referred to, it is well to point out that Congress did in no way dictate the phrasing of the proclamations, and furthermore a proclamation of May 9, 1864, could be cited as having no Congressional background and in which Lincoln said, "Enough is known of the army operation within the last five days to *claim our special gratitude to God,* while what remains undone demands our most sincere prayers to and *reliance upon Him,* without whom all human efforts are in vain."

Sworn statements by those who knew him are on record concerning incidents of Lincoln at prayer, and his own personal secretary substantiated facts concerning Lincoln engaging in prayer at Gettysburg. Statements by the nurse who often attended his family in illness tell of Lincoln's frequent prayers in the White House.

Founders of this great nation were convinced the formation of the Union bore a blessing from on High. Most of its Presidents have since expressed that same confidence.

The prayers of this nation, uttered as one, have ascended to a *Supreme Being.* There is ample evidence that those prayers have been heard. It is reasonable, therefore, to suspect the motives of those who attempt to cause religious strife and who grind away at the foundations of religious institutions as they exist under a doctrine of religious freedom in this land. The kneeling Lincoln and the kneeling Washington are wholesome examples for the American people. The man who is "too big" to follow them is indeed small.

HOUCK, HERBERT Spencer

DRAWER 23

SCULPTORS-H
(Statuettes)